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# CLOVER MITES



## How to control them around the home

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

# CLOVER M

THE clover mite,<sup>1</sup> an 8-legged, reddish or brownish creature smaller than a pinhead, is frequently a household pest. When clover mites invade homes, they overrun floors, walls, furniture, and windowpanes and get into beds and clothing. They do not bite people, transmit diseases, or feed on household furnishings or pantry supplies, but they are a nuisance. If they are crushed, they leave blood-red spots that are especially noticeable on linens, curtains, walls, and woodwork. It is difficult to remove these pests from homes without creating these stains.

The mites are annoying in the Northern United States and Canada. They seldom are a problem in the extreme Southern States.



## HABITS

Clover mites breed and feed in grasses, clovers, and other plants around buildings and on lawns. The heaviest infestation occurs at the sites of new homes: apparently new lawns and heavily fertilized old lawns are favorable for them.

While these mites are most annoying in the fall and early spring, they may be a nuisance to homemakers during any warm period in the winter. They may also invade homes in large numbers during the summer if their food plants have been cut or have dried up.

Late in the fall thousands of them may gather on vegetation around homes and on foundation walls and other outside surfaces. When cold weather arrives, they leave these exposed places for protected hiding places, and some enter houses. While in hiding, they are inactive. In the spring they become active again; large numbers crawl from their hiding places in search of food.

## DEVELOPMENT

Reddish eggs are laid singly or in masses on host plants during late summer or early fall. The mites then develop through four stages—larva, two nymphal stages, and adult. Each of these stages lasts 2 to 6 days. There may be two or more generations a year. The mite may pass the winter in any stage.

Several kinds of mites are called clover mites, and they differ somewhat in their habits. Control methods described in this leaflet may vary in effectiveness against the different kinds of mites, and in different localities. If you have difficulty keeping clover mites out of the house, remove all grass and weeds on a strip 18 inches to 2 feet around the foundation, and plant unfavorable host plants such as marigolds and zinnias. Treat this strip with one of the recommended insecticides if necessary.

<sup>1</sup> *Bryobia praetiosa* complex.

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## CONTROL

### OUTDOORS

Infestations of these mites inside buildings can be reduced or prevented by thoroughly spraying the lower exterior walls, the foundations, and 10 to 20 feet of adjacent lawn with Aramite, Dimite, or Chlorobenzilate. If an entire lawn is infested, it is advisable to treat it all.

You probably can get these materials from your local insecticide supplier. Apply them in accordance with the directions on the label. They are effective against adults and nymphs of the clover mite. It may take a day or two for their effects to be apparent, but they will continue to kill mites for a week or two after application. Low temperatures and rains may reduce the effectiveness of Aramite and Dimite.

Good outdoor control may also be achieved by applying a pound of 4- or 5-percent malathion dust per 1,000 square feet or by drenching the area within 10 feet of the foundation with a 0.5-percent malathion water-base spray. Since great numbers of mites may feed in protected parts of plants and well down toward their bases, apply enough spray to penetrate the vegetative cover. Repeated applications at 2- or 3-week intervals may be required throughout the summer and fall to keep the mites under control. A regular lawn spraying or dusting program during this period will reduce mite populations and subsequent migrations into homes. If a regular program is not feasible, late spring, early summer, and fall sprayings are probably the most important.

Older, but less effective, outdoor remedies include powdered sulfur applied to grass, window sills, vegetation near the house (particularly on the sunny side), or lubricating oil applied around the base of the foundation near the ground level.

*around the home*



## INDOORS

Control of the mite indoors is often difficult.

Preferred insecticides for control indoors are 0.5-percent lindane, 2-percent chlordane, and 1- to 2-percent malathion. Apply any one of these. The insecticide should be sprayed or painted around doors, windows, and other places where the mites may enter the house.

Repeated applications may be necessary every week or two. If the mites are numerous between sprayings, use a vacuum cleaner to capture them.

## Precautions

**In General.**—Most insecticides used for mite control are poisonous to people and to animals. . . . Always read the label on the insecticide you buy so you will know what it is and how to use it. . . . Keep the insecticides where children and pets cannot reach them. . . . When applying them, do not contaminate water supply, food, dishes, or kitchen utensils. . . . When you have finished applying them, clean the sprayer or duster and wash all exposed surfaces of the body with soap and water. Avoid breathing large amounts of mist or dust.

**Indoors.**—Avoid overdosage. Treatment of an entire room with any of the recommended materials is neither necessary nor advisable. Apply them only to areas of the room where mites are numerous or where you believe they are hiding.

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## CLOVER MITE

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